

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 07537 230942Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /056 W
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P R 230838Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7997
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 7537

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: SABURO EDA DIES

SUMMARY. SUDDEN DEATH OF SABURO EDA MAY 22 HAS CALLED INTO QUESTION VIABILITY OF HIS RECENTLY FORMED SOCIALIST CITIZENS' LEAGUE AND REMOVED COMPLICATING FACTOR FROM UPPER HOUSE ELECTION RACE. POSSIBILITY OF JSP SPLIT IN WAKE OF PROJECTED UPPER HOUSE ELECTION SETBACK HAS BEEN REDUCED. END SUMMARY.

1. SABURO EDA DIED MAY 22 AT 69. HIS DEATH WAS ATTRIBUTED VARIOUSLY TO LUNG CANCER AND HEPITITIS. A FORMER JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP) SECGEN AND VICE CHAIRMAN, EDA WAS LONG-TIME PROPONENT OF UNSUCCESSFUL PLAN TO REFORM JSP AND SEER OF WIDELY PUBLICIZED VISION OF JAPAN AS DEMOCRATIC WELFARE STATE. A LEADER OF JSP RIGHTWING, HE LEFT JSP MARCH 26 IN WAKE OF SHARP CLASH WITH PARTY'S DOGMATIC LEFTWING TO FORM SPLINTER SOCIALIST CITIZENS' LEAGUE (SCL).

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2. EDA'S DEATH HAS SURPRISED AND SHOCKED POLITICAL WORLD. AMID WIDESPREAD OUTPOURING OF SYMPATHY, HIS FOLLOWERS ARE DOING BEST TO MAINTAIN CONSIDERABLE MOMENTUM EDA HAD ACHIEVED FOR FLEDGLING DSCL. LONGTIME LIEUTENANT (AND JSP LOWER HOUSE MEMBER) SHIGEO OSHIBA (59) HAS ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO LEAVE JSP TO TAKE OVER SCL HELM. RUMORS ARE CIRCULATING THAT AN EDA SON WILL BE NOMINATED BY SCL TO TAKE HIS FATHER'S PLACE ON SCL

UPPER HOUSE NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY TICKET HOPING TO CAPITALIZE ON NAME AND SYMPATHY VOTE. SCL FORMAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MAY 25 IS BEING TURNED INTO EDA MEMORIAL SERVICE CERTAIN TO BE WELL PUBLICIZED.

3. COMMENT. WITH EDA'S DEMISE, FUTURE OF SCL IS IN DOUBT. ALTHOUGH IT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY RUN CANDIDATES IN SEVERAL UPPER HOUSE PREFECTURAL CONSTITUENCIES, EDA WAS COUNTED ON HEAVILY TO LEAD TICKET, OBTAIN FINANCIAL BACKING, AND EVENTUALLY TAKE ACTIVE ROLE IN LONG-HERALDED REALIGNMENT OF CENTRIST FORCES. WITHOUT EDA, GROUP MAY SOON SIMPLY WITHER AWAY. IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED HIS DEATH WILL ALSO IMPROVE PROSPECTS OF ESTABLISHED PARTIES, PARTICULARLY JSP, AND ENHANCE CHANCES THAT JCP CHAIRMAN MIYAMOTO WILL TOP POLITICAL (AS OPPOSED TO PERSONALITY) ENTRANTS IN UPPER HOUSE NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY RACE. EDA'S DEATH IS ALSO LIKELY TO REDUCE MARKEDLY PROSPECT OF JSP SPLIT ALONG IDEOLOGICAL LINES IN WAKE OF WIDELY FORECAST UPPER HOUSE ELECTION SETBACK. WITH EDA GONE AND SCL PROSPECTS UNCERTAIN, JSP RIGHTWINGERS ARE LIKELY TO SIT TIGHT. SHOESMITH

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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